

POWER WASHING REQUIREMENTS



This Policy gives the requirements for power washing of exterior building and pavement surfaces at Yale University.

During building renovations, on a periodic basis as part of maintenance activities, or to remove graffiti or other markings, it may be necessary to clean exterior building and pavement surfaces, including walls, sidewalks, parking lots and garages, entry ways, and other outdoor surfaces. A common method used for this cleaning is power washing, usually using pressurized water, sometimes with the use of detergents and other cleaning chemicals. However, certain guidelines must be followed when performing power washing.

First, it must be understood where the wash water is going and ultimately where it is to be discharged to. Sanitary sewer drains, to which all interior drains and fixtures such as sinks and toilets should be attached, lead wastewater to the wastewater treatment plant, for treatment prior to discharge to Long Island Sound. Storm sewers, to which roof drains and outdoor and street catch basins should be connected, direct rainwater to the storm sewer system, which discharges directly to Long Island Sound. The ground surface receives rainwater and run-off and can perform natural filtration; however, wastewater discharged to the ground surface can cause ground water contamination.

The Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection has issued guidelines for power washing activities. For all discharges, the following requirements must be followed:

- Neither cleaners, detergents, nor the surface to be cleaned, may contain certain prohibited substances as defined in CTDEP regulations (List available from OEHS; prohibited substances include chlorinated compounds, metals, and certain solvents).
- Discharge of power washing wastewater from paint stripping operations, other than graffiti removal, is prohibited.

- Discharge to storm sewers or surface waters is prohibited. All storm drains in the vicinity must be blocked to ensure no discharge to the storm sewer system or surface water body. In rare cases the CTDEP may grant a temporary exemption, however treatment of the wastewater prior to discharge would most likely be necessary:



- Loose trash, sand, and debris should first be removed by dry means (sweeping, vacuuming, etc.), with proper disposal of solids.
- Log of activities must be kept.
- The pH of the discharge must be 5.0 to 10.0.

For discharges to the ground surfaces, it must be insured that sufficient absorption capacity exists to prevent run-off into storm sewers or surface water bodies and that the discharge does not impact any drinking water wells.

For discharge to the sanitary sewer system, the local sewer authority must be notified in writing (this should be done through OEHS).

Another option is to collect all wastewater for re-use or disposal off-site at a properly permitted facility.



Prior to initiating any power washing activities, please contact your assigned EHS Safety Advisor or the contact listed below. EHS can review proposed detergents chemical cleaners, determine discharge pathways, check pH levels, perform sewer authority notifications, and provide the necessary log forms. After completion, a copy of the log should be send to EHS.

Contact for power washing discharge issues is:

Whyndam Abrams
Environmental Affairs Officer
203-432-2093
Whyndam.abrams@yale.edu